
T H E

CRISIS.

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DURING THE PRESENT BLOODY CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA.

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For the CRISIS.



S there must be in all well regulated states, a variety of offices, in a due subordination one to another, for the management and carrying on the business of the public! so the nature and power of these offices vary, in different nations, according to the different constitutions of their respective governments. For this reason in absolute monarchies, we generally find a person invested by the prince with the sole management and direction of all his affairs, under the title of Prime Minister, who is, by virtue of his office, as he commonly proves himself to be by his actions, an arbitrary viceroy or deputy tyrant. But the power of such a minister seems to be inconsistent with the nature of a free state, whether a common wealth or a limited monarchy, (unless it be upon extra-

extraordinary occasions, as the Roman Dictators were created of old) because the absolute, uncontrollable will of one man has been generally found to end in the destruction of liberty in general; and though it may be said that a limited monarch cannot delegate more power than he is invested with himself, and therefore cannot make any of his ministers absolute; yet every such prince has too much power to be reposed in the hands of any of his servants; for experience shews us, that a worse use is commonly made of the regal authority, when in the possession of a private subject, than under the direction of the prince himself; and there seems to be an obvious reason for this; since a king, who is possessed, during life, of all the power, prerogative, and jurisdiction, which are agreeable to the fundamental laws of the country over which he reigns, and has the same rights intailed on his posterity, cannot, without being a man of very ill principles, have any farther views, because his true interest, upon a little recollection, will instruct him to confine his thoughts within those sacred barriers: whereas a minister, who is in great power to-day, and perhaps afraid of losing it to-morrow (especially if he be a man of a small, paternal inheritance) will be tempted to amass exorbitant wealth by indirect methods, and aggrandize his own family at the expence of the public. Nay, even supposing the case of a bad prince, who through the instigations of ambition, or a cruel tyrannical disposition, should be inclined to oppress his subjects, I believe the bulk of the people would be much more easy under any hardships, which could be laid upon them by their sovereign, than such as they should suffer from one of their equals.

This is sufficient to shew, that the office of Prime Minister is, in its nature, of dangerous consequence to a free people: but there is another consideration, which though it be not of the same importance, ought to make every rational Briton join his voice and his interest against such an over-grown power in any of his fellow subjects; for

When the prince reserves the prerogative in his own hands, or divides it amongst a certain number of his subjects, to be administered in an equal manner (as it has been most usual in this kingdom) the royal smiles, favours, and honours, as well as the office of the kingdom

dom, both great and small, are commonly distributed in the same *equal* and impartial manner. Whereas when the whole power of the crown has been lodged in a single hand, we may observe that grants, titles and preferments, have been generally monopolized, and the whole bounty of a court, thought little enough to satiate the craving hungry appetites of one family.

Nay, we have seen this spirit of rapine and rapaciousness carried to such a height under some administrations, that, not content with all the crown has had in its power to bestow, they have attempted to engross the favours and suffrages of the people; nor do I want instances to shew, that opposing only a Welch cousin of a great man has been called opposing the ministry, and looked on as a mark of malignancy and disaffection.

As in considerable and self-interested as this observation may seem, yet it certainly ought to have some weight in a free nation; for as a bishop of SARUM very justly observed, in answer to one of his opponents in a controversy, that although no man has a natural right to a place at court; yet every man has a right to get one if he can. And if the old beaten topick, of all the whig writers can justify that a kingdom was not made for one man, meaning the Prince, it could not surely be designed only to gratify the pride, avarice and ambition of a private subject.

But as such power in any minister is contrary to the interest of the People; so it is also of dangerous consequence to the Prince himself, especially in a limited government.

An absolute monarch indeed, who is under no restraint but his own will, may raise a favourite to what height of power he pleases without being under any great apprehensions from his treachery or ambition, because he can pull him down when he begins to grow insolent, with the same high hand that lifted him up.

But a limited monarch, who, in order to reign happily, is obliged to preserve an harmony and good understanding with his people, (who
are

are, by the constitution join'd with him in the legislative power) ought to be very cautious how far he aggrandizes any of his servants, or trusts the power out of his own hands; because a minister who has the disposition of preferments and honours, may thereby strengthen himself so much by cabals, alliances, obligations, and immense wealth that it may become dangerous for the prince to displace him, even though he should be, personally, as ill beloved by himself, as he is by the generality of his subjects.

I have now before me a little book intitled, "Rules of Government, or a true balance between Sovereignty and Liberty; said to be written by a person of honour, immediately after the civil war, in Charles the First's time;" which contains many useful directions upon this subject, some of them I beg leave to transcribe.

He tells us, in one place (speaking of counsellors) that over greatness in one, or over strict combination in a few, may be both dangerous to a PRINCE. In another place he says, that it is a great fault in a Prince "to look upon no man himself, but through a glass, or as the image of a man is reflected unto him from a favourite, or some great officer; for this is to strengthen their root, and weaken his own; for here, though the guilt is his, the obligation is another's. This makes him have many attendants, but few servants; for servants placed about him by great men, are rather their spies than his servants: such unconcernedness as this, who are about him, makes him appear like a town blocked up; he can freely receive no provisions he stands in need of; and his own servants are disheartened by perceiving great men's friends or servants every day preferred or gratify'd before them. This course chills all public spiritedness; for men, introduced by favourites, think they shall last no longer than their patrons, who are often changed or in the wain; and so they come unto a court like harvest men, who serve only in a short time to reap that, which others, plowed and harrowed; or they work only in fair weather, and when the corn is carrying into the barn".

The same author gives this wholesome advice to Ministers of state in the following paragraph, which I beg leave to recommend to

to the serious consideration of all great men in the several courts of Europe.

“ A wise counsellor says he will not engross too many affairs into
 “ his own hands, nor encroach upon other men’s offices, nor
 “ be apt to undervalue them in it to raise his own credit, by the
 “ loss of other men’s; for he that does good offices to others, is in the
 “ best way to make hearty friends to himself: and he must be pa-
 “ tient to hear other men’s advices; nay with some respectfulness,
 “ bear their follies: And he must be unconcerned when his own
 “ counsels are not complied with, or are laid aside.

I shall leave these wholesome directions to those whom they may concern, and conclude with observing in general, that the office of a Prime Minister seems to be calculated for an absolute government; though, in my opinion, even such a government would fare much better, if the prince would vouchsafe to manage his affairs himself. But the power of such an officer is intirely repugnant to the safety of a free state, which is so fully demonstrated by history and experience, that I need not insist upon it any further. In governments purely popular, I cannot at present recollect any instance of such a minister, unless it be of the famous *De Wit* in Holland, whose terrible fate should deter others from attempting such a power.

In England, we have been often pestered with these over-grown, rapacious wretches in former times; but for several years past we were free from them, till that upstart Scotchman, Lord Bute, made his appearance in the miserable reign of George the Third!

A Receipt to make a LORD, occasioned by a late Promotion.

T A K E a man who by nature a true son of earth,
 By rapine enrich’d, though a beggar by birth;
 In genius the lowest, ill bred, and obscene,
 Of mortals most wicked, most nasty in mien,

By

By none ever trusted, yet ever employ'd,
 In blunders most fertile, in merit quite void;
 A scold in the senate, abroad a buffoon,
 The scorn and the jest of all courts but his own.
 A slave to that wealth, which ne'er made him a friend,
 And proud of that cunning, which ne'er gain'd an end.
 A dupe in each treaty, a swift in each vote,
 In manners and form a compleat hottentot.

Such a one could you find, of all men I'd commend him,
 But be sure let the curse of each Briton attend him:
 Thus fitly prepar'd add grace to the throne,
 The folly of monarchs, and skreen of a crown,
 Take a prince for his purpose without ears or eyes,
 And a long parchment patent, stuff'd brimful of lyes,
 These mingled together, a fiat shall pass,
 And that thing strut a peer, who before was an ass.

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